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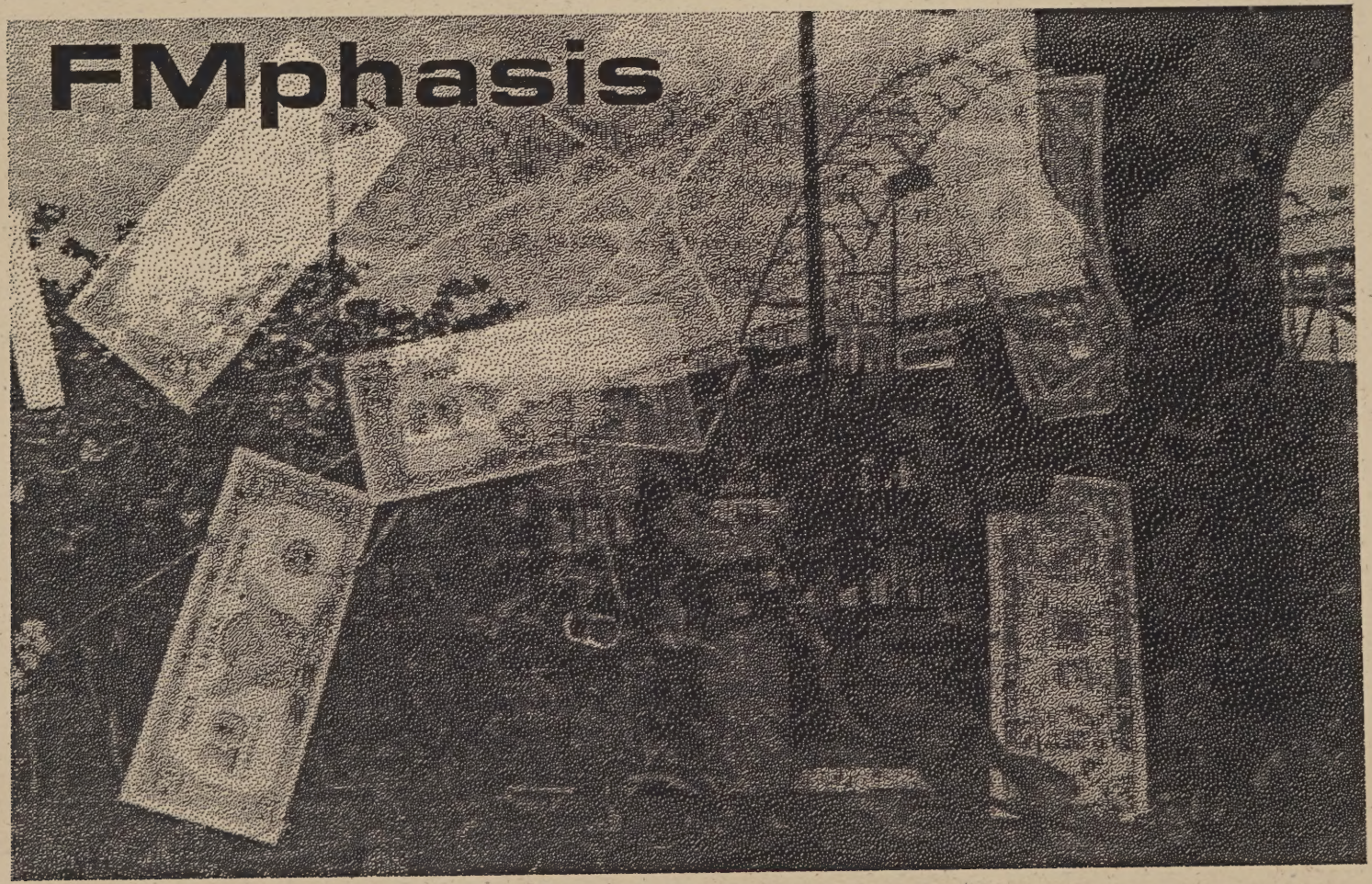
FMphasis

# FMphasis

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# CD REVIEWS

EDITOR'S NOTE: Hey, this is Pauls. A quick word concerning the reviews: the albums were selected at random. I mean, really. We blindfolded Craig and immersed him in a vat of Proctor vegetarian chili. Then we added two tablespoons of salt, a pinch of oregano, and six- hundred and eighty-four CDs. The first two he clutched in his desperate, drowning hands were the ones we reviewed. Enjoy!

## RORY BLOCK - WHEN A WOMAN GETS THE BLUES

**Review by Gigi Emerson**

"Take me back to the place where I first saw the light," sings Rory Block in her traditional vocal piece entitled "Sweet Sunny South." Her voice cracks on the word *light*, and by this track -- the seventh on the album -- you are no longer amazed that the note to which it cracks is even more beautiful than the original note. Her voice is rough and comfortable; she is an acoustic blues-woman who is evidently well-versed in traditional blues vocals.

I had not heard of Rory Block before I popped the CD in the radio station's CD player the night my article was due. After the dissapointment Chris experienced with Skyfish (about which you will soon read), I was worried about this whole 'random CD' thing.

But Rory Block soothed my fears. By the end of the final track, a wistful homage to the railroad called "Railroadin' Some," I was left satisfied and thinking. The last song had something of a Woody Guthrie feel to it; in its lengthy list of city names, I was reminded of the great expanse of land west of us, an expanse which has inspired blues and western musicians for nearly a hundred years.

This is an album with a remarkable amount of range -- if not musically, then in its diversity of song themes. Block moves from the smoldering sexuality of "I Let My Daddy Do That," to a preachy religious pose in the next track -- "Be Ready When He Comes." This song was strangely out of place on the album. Doesn't blues celebrate the sweet agony of the secular life? The second to last song, where she sings, "Take my heart again, I'll never learn anyway, baby. My bones are achin' baby, can't get out of bed at all," is more like it.

Overall, this is a good album. Released on the mid-sized label Rounder, which features other great western bands like the Picketts, it

should receive fairly good placement in record stores. If I'm going to stress the role of the consumer as supporter of less-well-known artists (which I am) then I recommend that you go out and buy it. Besides attractive packaging, you'll even get a solid blues CD, a welcome addition to any music collection!

## SKYFISH - SKYFISH

**Review by Chris Farrell**

Skyfish, a quintet from California, debuts with their self-titled album on Blackhorse Records. The band consists of your basic rock ensemble: two guitarists, one drummer, a bass player, and a lead singer - Frankie Touch. In the liner notes, one of the guitarists is credited as playing mandolin, but I can honestly say that nowhere on this album did I hear any instrument as such. No individual member of this band actually seems to know how to play their instruments, which always makes for a fun time, unless you are the one listening. The album proved to be weak in variety, and Skyfish's lack of both musicianship and originality does not make this album worth writing home about.

The first four tracks on the disc, "Ain't Seen Nothing," "You're The One I Wanna Do," "Back It Up," and "Heart's Wide Open," are extremely difficult to tell apart. Each tune consists of the same elements: three or four chords, an "in your face" drum beat, a metallic, driving base line, and, of course, Frankie Touch's husky vocals that seem to be going nowhere. The sound reminded me of a Guns n' Roses meets Spin Doctors, if you want to try to imagine that. In fact, it even sounds like Jeff Walsh (no, not Joe Walsh), the lead guitarist, rips off Slash's lick from Paradise City on the second track.

Just when I thought it could not get any worse, I turned on the fifth track, "Watcha Gonna Do." On this particular number, the band experiments with a more reggae sounding tone... BAD IDEA. Instead of showing off any ability to mix it up and display versatility, Skyfish totally massacres the style as a whole. Reggae with distorted, heavy metal guitar solos is painful to the ear.

The rest of the album follows to the exact same format: five hard rock songs followed by another painful reggae rendition. This time, however, Chris Diurni decides to add one more insult with a slide guitar exhibition that would make Duane Allman turn over in his grave. Do yourself a favor - if you see this disc in a store near you, RUN!

# Review of Bartok String Quartets

**performed by the Takacs Quartet on October 12 and 14**

**By: Matthew Grant**, Faculty, German Department

I've always felt that the contemporary rock combo (drums, bass, guitar, and vocals), ubiquitous in both "classic" and "alternative" rock formats, was born of the 19th century string quartet. In fact, one need look no further than Beethoven's string quartets to find the riffing romanticism and the dedicated diatonacity which can be heard across the rock spectrum, from Kiss to Luna. Even Heavy Metal (of either the "speed" or "death" variety), with its frenetic tempos and recklessly thrashing chromaticism (I'm thinking here of the plateau that this genre achieved in the mid-80's with Slayer's Hell Awaits album - a milestone for metal, especially side one, culminating in the masterpiece: "At Dawn They Sleep") can be traced back to the third movement of Beethoven's "Harp" Quartet, Op. 74 or his "Great Fugue", Op. 133 (I think those numbers are right).

But what, you may ask, does this have to do with the remarkable performances of Bela Bartok's landmark string quartets by the virtuosi of the lively and daring Takács Quartet (Edward Dusinberre, violin; Karoly Schranz, violin; Roger Tapping, viola; Andras Fejer, cello)? Well, seeing and hearing these pieces performed with such inspired and unyielding élan by such accomplished musicians reminds us that simply because a particular music is "contemporary" it is not "modern" or, shall I say, "more advanced" than something composed and performed for the first time fifty or one hundred and fifty years ago. Although these works first appeared on Earth between 1908 and 1939, we have still not quite caught up to them: they are still further "ahead" than any music being produced by those humans with whom we currently share this planet.

Let me put this another way: Bela Bartok is Sonic Youth pulled through Infinity. One can unmistakably recognize the feedback drones and tonal experimentation associated with Sonic Youth in the third movement of the 1st Quartet or the Finale of the 5th, but nowhere in Sonic Youth's burgeoning oeuvre will we come across anything approaching the sublimity of the middle movement of the 4th Quartet, for example. Moreover, you would be hard-pressed to find an analog to the rhythmic audacity of these quartets in Sonic Youth or any rock group - bar none!

Hearing the Takács Quartet play on those nights in this universe, was a revelation, a musical experience like no other. Andras Fejer's cello solo in the 4th Quartet, winding its way into the stratosphere against the ethereal violin/viola backdrop was astonishing. The variety of sounds -- from the comical to the extraterrestrial -- which these men coaxed, at Bartok's bidding, from their instruments, were surprising, hallucinatory and awe-inspiring. In many ways, the 4th Quartet, as performed by these gentlemen, was the high point of the series (though the 1st Quartet is a personal favorite of mine and they played it with both aplomb and panache). To show that I was not alone in this sentiment, when this piece (the 4th) was through, the audience expressed its unbridled enthusiasm by calling the goup onstage three times (and this was before intermission!)

Don't get me wrong. I admire Sonic Youth and I find Daydream Nation, for example, to be a worthy and rich album ("Teenage Riot" being one of my favorite songs of all time), but what the Takács Quartet drove home again and again was not that contemporary pop music (indie or otherwise) is harmonically conservative -- far from it, dissonance thrives -- but, more significantly, that it is rythmically inhibited when not absolutely retrograde. The tyranny of the backbeat becomes apparent as soon as one hears something liberated from its domineering, driving clutches. The Takács Quartet masterfully navigated the rythmic idiosyncracies of Bartok's work and it was herein that their star shone most brightly. No matter how odd or jarring, they effortlessly leapt from one rhythmic episode to the next and made (let?) the music dance with mad electricity.

If there is anything the youth of today could learn from the youth of yesteryear, or at least the eternal youthfulness of Bela Bartok's compositions, it would be that their music will be better able to capture and express the chaos and the anguish, the ecstacy and exultation of their young lives, once it has set aside the brutal whip whose monotonous lashes "keep" time, keep it in line, forcing it to obey. For reasons of freedom, and because I celebrate the joy of youth, I believe that young ears should tune into the Bartok String Quartets, and in doing so, they would find no more able stewards than the gentle but firm hands of the Takács Quartet.

# The WRMC Schedule

*Listen To Live, Live To Listen!*

***Sunday:*** 7-9:00am - Alex Loth (Rock n' Roll)
9-11:00am - John Mauro (Jazz)
11-1:00pm - Nick Toren (Jazz)
1-3:00pm - Carlos Hortas (Jazz)
3-5:00pm - **Ian Barkin, Phil Audete** (Jazz)
5-7:00pm - Jason Ennis (Jazz)
7-8:00pm - ***Knowledge Is Good!*** The captivating and competetive quiz show returns in a new time slot!
8-9:00pm - Sportstalk
9-11:00pm - **Jason Mantzoukas** (Jazz)
11-1:00am - Jordan Romm (Jazz)
**1-3:00am - Ariane White (A soothing blend of herbs and spices)**
**5-7:00am - No show :(**

***Monday:***6-8:00am - Amy Villagio, Wendy Peterson (Folk)
8-10:00am - Nick Mollander, Kate Crowley (Folk It Up!)
10-12:00pm - Martha Newell, Shue Bellows (Folk)
***THE WRMC NEWS AT NOON - UNTIL 12:15pm***
12:15-1:30 - Steve Hildreth (Jazz)
1:30-3:00pm - Jeff Vallone, Chris Farrell, Melissa Loeben (Jazz)
3-5:00pm - **Nicole Allard** (Women's Voices)
***THE WRMC NEWS AT FIVE - UNTIL 5:15***
5:15-7:00pm - Megan Byrne, Kirby Harbeck, Mimi Mather (Rock)
7-9:00pm - Colleen Oates, Dan Ruan ("The Supermodel Show" - Rock)
9-11:00pm - **Nate Johnson, Bryan Straton** (Rock)
11-1:00am - **Dan Meyer** (Rock)
1-3:00am - **Pauls Toutonghi** (Absolut Rock)
3-8:00am - No show :(

***Tuesday:*** 8-10:00am - Will Clark (Blues)
10-12:00pm - David Shannon (Classical)
***THE WRMC NEWS AT NOON - UNTIL 12:15***
12:15-1:30pm - Hannah Lewis, Alex Lee (EQ)
1:30-3:00pm - Ben Lucas (Jazz)
3-4:00pm - **Pulpit Fiction**
**4-5:00pm** - Miguel Vides (La Hora Latina)
***THE WRMC NEWS AT FIVE - UNTIL 5:15***
5:15-7:00pm - **Justin Shipman, Michael Stoddard** (Rock)
7-9:00pm - Bret Thibault ("Hi Dad, I'm In Jail" - Rock)
9-11:00pm - **Howie Young, Stu Santee** ("The Hamburger Train" - Rock)
11-1:00am - Austin Ramzy, Pat Taylor (Rock)
1-3:00am - **Matt Grant** ("Absolute Knowledge and Infinite Longing")
3-8:00am - No show :(

***Wednesday:*** 8-10:00am - Dan Mack (World)
10-12:00pm - Malaya Rivera-Drew (Urban)
***THE WRMC NEWS AT NOON - UNTIL 12:15***
12:15-1:30pm - Ben Humphrey, Katie Sloan (Eclectic)
1:30-3:00pm - Dave Cohen (Classical)
3-4:00pm - Pauls Toutonghi (Women's Voices)
4-5:00pm - The French Show!
***THE WRMC NEWS WITH PIE - UNTIL 5:15***
5:15-7:00pm - Hilary Lease ("Nothing But Noise" - Rock)
7-9:00pm - **Melanie Moser (Rock)**
9-11:00pm - Topher Lewis, Tim McMillan (Rock)
11-1:00am - Matt Hazen, Jeff Vilone ("Georgetown On My Mind" - Rock)
1-3:00am - **Brandon Baldwin** (Rock)
3-8:00am - No show :(

***Thursday:*** 8-10:00am - David McDermott, K. Lewandowski, W. Swanson (Hour of Power" - Folk)
10-12:00pm - **Hannah Lewis** (World)_
***THE WRMC NEWS AT NOON - UNTIL 12:15***
12:15-1:30pm - Jim McGrath, Noah Bruce (Blues)
1:30-3:00pm - Graham Balch, Matt Ford (Country)
3-4:00pm - Matt Weinberg, Pete Emerson (Sports)
4-5:00pm - Ken Ross (Chinese Music)
***THE WRMC NEWS AT FIVE - UNTIL 5:15***
5:15-7:00pm - **Jonathan Howard** (Rock)
7-9:00pm - Chris Zegarelli, Doug Levine (Rock)
9-11:00pm - Greg Carolan (Rock)
11-1:00am - Casey Dove, Emily Bracken (Rock)_
3-6:00am - No show :(

***Friday:*** 6-8:00am - Andy Smith, Mara Weiner (Folk)
8-10:00am - Meredith DuBarry, Sangwha Hong (Folk)
10-12:00pm - Darcy Falkenhagen (Jazz)
***THE WRMC NEWS AND A SPOON - UNTIL 12:15***
12:15-1:30pm - **Madhavi Nevader, George Roth** (Classical)
1:30-3:00pm - David Shannon (Classical)
3-4:00pm - Athena Fliakos (Oldies)
4-5:00pm - Judy Flores (El Sason Latino)
***THE WRMC NEWS AT FIVE - UNTIL 5:15***
5:15-7:00pm - Chris Freeman, Scott Morian (Urban)
7-9:00pm - **David Luyimbazi** (Urban)
9-11:00pm - **Pablo Calvo** (Urban)
11-1:00am - Ginelle Andrews, Tanya Trodden (Urban)
1-3:00am - **Ian Brand** (Rock)
3-5:00am - **Chris Vourlias** (Urban)
5-7:00am - No show :(

*Saturday:*7-9:00am - **Anne Bruder, Mercedes Lorenzo** (Rock)
9-11:00am - Kim Conaty, Sabrina Savodnik (Rock)
11-1:00pm - James Mantooth (Rock)
1-3:00pm - Surendra Thapa, Jeffrey Brown (Rock)
3-5:00pm - **Mike DeBlois, Mike Larson** (Canadian Rock)
5-9:00pm - ***SATURDAY NIGHT AT THE OPERA***
9-11:00pm - **Frank Nanton** ("Soul Shack" - Urban)
11:00-1:00am - Ben Hardy, Karen Mitchell (Urban)
1-3:00am - Jenn Capeto (Rock)
3-7:00am - No show :(

# Dirt Merchants:
## The Post-Show Interview Extravaganza
by Jon Howard

**Context:**

The Dirt Merchants, a great- though impossible to describe- band from Boston, have just completed an amazing set at Burlington's Club Toast. The show would have been even more amazing had it not been for the Tea Party's (headlining band) deader-than-Elvis crowd. They were so quiet that after one of the songs they simply decided not to applaud or make any noise at all. Maybe I'm weird, but I have *never* seen that...ever. Admittedly Vermont is very different from Boston, but there are some things you just don't do at a show. Booing is preferable to utter silence.

They rocked anyway, though, and after helping them reload their equipment, Alex Kisch, the band's bassist, was nice enough to let me into their van to do an interview with him. That being said, here it is:

*Okay, how long has this tour been going on?*

Um, well we just now, in the immediate sense, just got back from about three weeks...we went out with Letters to Cleo and Fig Dish. So we went kind of North East up to Cleveland, Buffalo, whatever, then down around the East Coast, down the Atlantic states, and South, and ended up in New Orleans. So two days ago we were in...we drove a thousand miles from Tennessee-

*Mike Malone, the band's guitarist, loads some stuff into the van, checks to make sure I'm not stealing anything, and leaves.*

So we just drove a thousand miles- seven and a half hours- back from Tennessee the other day...just to get it over with. And that was the most recent...and then we did about six weeks over the summer out to the West Coast.

*What would you say-besides this one- have been your best and worst shows?*

Just recently we had a couple of really good shows. We had a great show in Nashville, and in Winston Salem. Both of the those were totally unexpected and just really good, a really good crowd. We were just like "wow"...We had a really bad show, too, in Statesborough, Georgia, like this total, kind of out of the way...The Fig Dish guys almost got their asses kicked because they were up there, "the person with the pick-up truck, you have your lights on". Just taunting them a little bit.

We had particularly not a great show in Toledo, Ohio. We opened up for a dance troupe that opened up for a, I don't know, a Rusted Root kind of band, or something like. But we opened up for a junior high school African dance troupe, so that was a pretty good booking job there.

*Where haven't you played that you would like to?*

Europe, Japan, in the States, uh...hmmm...where haven't we played...there's a lot now, I guess. We've touched a lot of the areas. Kansas. Lawrence, Kansas is supposed to pretty cool. Seriously, I want to get to Lawrence, Kansas.

*Okay, now we're getting into the deeper stuff. What's your approach to recording versus playing live?*

They're pretty different. I mean, playing the shows you're just playing the songs in that immediate sense and then recording- to the extent we've done- is a pretty gradual process. You don't really know necessarily what's going to come out of it when you go in. You have some rough ideas, but as you're doing it things kind of develop and just as you put everything together it kind of comes out maybe very differently than what you think it's going to sound like. Whereas if you're playing live you're hoping it's going to come out more or less like what you want it to, with some variation.

*How did the group come together and then end up putting out an album?*

Well, let's see. Mike Malone and I had gone to college together a number of years ago and then we lived together in New York for a while. Both of us had come up to Boston to go to grad school and

Mike's brother John, the drummer, had come up to go to grad school also so we just started playing casually and started getting some gigs a little bit and then...we couldn't sing very well. So we started looking for someone to sing and another guitar player, or possibly bass player- I know how to play guitar. Maria came along through an ad in the paper, the first person we saw. So that kind of clicked.

Then, over time we did some demos and stuff and then we just put out a couple of 7 inches on our own and distributed them, basically by ourselves and sent them to radio and stuff. And blah blah blah and then, you know, through a whole bunch of series of...things we ended up getting a deal with Zero Hour and putting out "Scarified".

*What's your relationship like with Zero Hour?*

It's good. It's really good. We recently signed a deal with Epic. That happened over the summer. So now Zero Hour are promoting this record until the end of the year and are sort of working cooperatively with Epic. But it's still good. There's some really good people there and we're good friends with them, so it's a good relationship.

*How do you feel, do you feel you're different now as opposed to the time when Maria first joined, after you've done all this touring and recorded the album?*

I guess we've just grown. Individually and as a group especially. In a lot of ways as you continue on in a band, I think in any circumstance- and especially if you start to enjoy some level of success, you know, put out a record, and if you get a record deal, and start touring blah blah blah- it gets better and better and gets easier and easier. But at the same time it gets harder and harder. There's just a lot more to deal with. Like very day there's just more of everything to deal with. More problems can possibly come up. Everything has more wrinkles. Touring has its problems...touring can be really frustrating at first. Going out with Letters and Fig Dish was a lot easier because Letters To Cleo has a huge audience all over the place. Our music is not totally compatible, but enough that people got it and so there was a built-in audience there and that made it a lot easier. People were nice to us.

*Maria (singer/guitarist) pops in, asks around to see if anyone has tape, and leaves before my stunted brain can think of anything to ask her. Damn.*

*You guys won the WBCN ("The rock of Boston") Rock 'n' Rumble. What did that do for you guys as a group and how you started thinking about the band as well as how your audiences were?*

In terms of what it did for us, it didn't, you know psychologically or anything, it didn't do much. We didn't think much was going to happen with it and we weren't like "yeah, the rumble and let's go in and that's our strategy." Whatever, they offered it and we were like "yeah okay, we'll do it". The idea is kind of stupid. But it's a good opportunity to play in front of people and it paid really well. Even if you just play the first round you get $750 for the gig, which was really good. So the best thing it did was it gave us a big wad of cash and a lot of good prizes. We recorded a lot of the record with free studio time from them. We had something like 35-40 hours of free studio time at a couple of different studios, which is really expensive. Plus over $3000 in cash and other goodies.

So that was really good and actually ended up being a real big help. It gave us some good press and it was like a little boost at the time. You know, people saw us and so it was positive on the whole. The contest itself is kind of like...the idea of having bands "battle it out" is kind of absurd.

*It blends music with professional wrestling. What do guys see yourselves doing in the future? I don't know, just down the road generally.*

Basically continuing on this track- making records, touring, hopefully going abroad next year. Definitely more of the same but with increasing results and having more people know who we are and working with the bigger label be able to more effectively distribute the record and just kind of get people to know who we are.

*Of course, you're going to have problems with the indie crowd. They'll probably accuse you of selling out or something.*

Yeah, we'll have to work on maintaining our indie creds. Dispelling the indie myth.

*So were you guys playing new stuff tonight?*

We played, yeah, maybe five or six songs that weren't on the record, so almost half the stuff wasn't...

*So is your general approach to writing, then, to sort of write the songs on the road or get a general idea of what you want to do and then go in the studio after a tour...?*

It's really difficult to try to write anything on the road because you're either driving or you're playing or you're soundchecking or you're sleeping. There's very little time to just kind of...and there's nowhere to set up and play or anything or even acoustic...it's just really difficult. So, when we're around and we have down time we play a lot and we just try to work on stuff...we just recently recorded a 20 song demo of stuff we've been working on for the next record.

*That's a lot of songs.*

Yeah, and hopefully we'll have some more in us in the next couple weeks 'cause we have a little down time now. We're probably going to record in January and February. Ummm...I don't remember what you're question was...

*That's okay...ummm...What's your favorite thing about "Scarified" and what's the one thing you would change?*

Well, I guess, speaking for myself, I can't speak for the others, but...umm...it's flaw...well let's see, how can I say this. What I think some people might find to be a flaw in the record, I really like, which is the fact that its got a lot of different things going on in terms of styles and genres and sounds. And I like that. I mean, that's like the one thing I'm almost proud of the most. A lot of records today I find I get frustrated in that I'll really like a record but I'll grow a little tired of it just 'cause even though it might have a lot of great songs or a great sound it's generally fairly one-dimensional. And I like that that record has come out being fairly, well I think pretty multi-dimensional just in the way it sounds and the kind of songs that are on it.

I think our next record will be similar in that we are going to try to hopefully produce it in such a way that the songs are produced,

approached in a different way. So it's not like, okay here's a lot of different songs, but they all have one cohesive sound to them...To the extent that we could do that in a way that we planned to do it, whereas on *Scarified*, recording it was done over the course of a while and on a very tight budget.

So, when we had some money together it would be like "okay you have 'till 6 o'clock in the morning to get these four songs done", you know, whenever it was. So we were in there at 3 o'clock in the morning, Maria's trying to get the best performance she can on a song, singing, which can be hard and you end up sacrificing...You end up getting something (unclear recording) I guess, 'cause you're not spending lots of time on it and just kind of going in and boom, it's spontaneous. But at the same time, you look back and you're like "wow, if we had another to mix that I would have done this and that and I wish my performance in that was better". But, everything's so under the gun. So, we're definitely all looking forward to having the luxury of being able to into a recording studio for, like, three weeks and take our time and kind of really experiment and do it right, and try to realize a lot of things.

I think my favorite song on the record is the title song, "Scarified". It was the last song we recorded, it was done kind of separate from everything else. It was done in this small studio in Boston and we knew we were just going in to record the one song so we could do it from start to finish instead of doing the basics, and then doing overdubs, and then doing this and that.

So the whole thing was very mellow and we started coming up with ideas on the spot, everyone was just so relaxed. We were like, "let's put some banjo on there, I have this banjo I bought, it's not tuned but I'll just try to play it" and everyone was like "that's cool." And it came out and then it was like "well, let's try this piano." So there were like little, little touches that are kind of subtle, but I think make it a really, really good track. The approach was just really slow and relaxed so...yeah.

*Well, I think I've exhausted my questions...thanks!*

Thank you.

FIN

# Interview with JACKOPIERCE

by Justin Shipman

Jackopierce started as an accoustic duo several years ago, fronted by Jack O'neil and Carey Pierce. Based in Austin, Texas, they've got a rythmic, bluesy sound that you'd expect to find on the movie soundtrack to Jack Kerouac's *On the Road.* They played a very energetic show at Club Toast in September, where I was graciously allowed to do this interview.

*How's the tour?*

Carey: It's goin great, it's a lot of fun. This is a great bunch of people.

*And how long is the tour going to last?*

It's going to be about three weeks, we're taking it all the way down to Atlanta, and then all the way over to Birmingham and Nashville.

*So you're starting up North and working your way down...*

Yeah, started off in Boston last night, it was awesome. It was at the Mama Kin, that Aerosmith club, and it was packed, we sold out at nine o'clock. It was great.

*You've got a lot of road songs, did these come from prior experience, or touring...*

Yeah, just being on the road. Trying to keep up relationships from the phone booths, you know. Trying to keep up your entire life from the phone booth. I mean, today I had nineteen messages on my machine, from two days, you know, and I borrowed a chair from one of these restaurants and just put it down in front of the pay phone and sat outside for about forty-five minutes. People hated my guts, but I was like "I haven't been on the phone in three days," you know, "back off, man".

*A lot of your songs seem to draw from personal experience, like March and Iron John, Along for the Ride was about a friend...how do you find the subjects for your songs, is it just whatever comes to you?*

Just, yeah, just pretty much whenever it decides to knock on the door, you know. And sometimes you sit around for weeks waiting for somebody to knock, you know, and it doesn't happen, and that's the worst, but some of those were seriously, personally directly pointed, some of them just kind of evolved. A lot of Iron John talks about that...that music was actually an instrumental that we'd been playing for a couple years, and then all of a sudden he wrote these beautiful lyrics and put the two together. I mean in essence that song took two or three years to make, subtly, you know, just happens over time.

*And how do most of your songs come together, do you play around with chord progressions, and just do it, or do you have a specific idea that you build from?*

No, it's usually melding the two. Usually one's written...we both write all the time, we're both so full of shit, just stuff, and then we're always writing music, and sooner or later they come together. And now we have a bass player and a drummer, and our bass player especially is incredibly musical, and he's really good at sayin "Hey man, that's a good idea, but why don't you try this, throw an intro here, put a bridge here. So we got a new bass player who...it's just an amazing back-up band. They're not even a back-up band, they're our band.

*And is there a new album in the works? Any new songs...*

Yeah, it's done. We just finished Monday night, about ten o'clock Monday night, arrived in Boston at five-thirty yesterday morning, and slept in Boston, woke up and played the show, and here we are. Fuckin, partied all last night, cause we're on tour with all these great bands, they're all great guys, and we just...everybody's trying to outdrink everybody else, it's really a good time.

*And do you know when that's going to be released?*

It's going to be out in February. It was produced by Don Smith, who's done Rolling Stones, Tom Petty, and U2, amongst other bands, he did actually From Good Homes' record. You know about Aware, you know why we're out here, right?

*This is the first time I heard of it...*

It's just a grass roots compilation of bands, you know, like us, From Good Homes, bands that follow the same docterine as Dave Matthews and Blues Traveller and Hootie all follow, just working on the mailing list and playing colleges, and word of mouth. And it's all different music, very different music, but they're all based on the same idea: audience first. You know what I mean? Not worried about you fuckin radio guys. I mean radio's great as an outlet and a happening but it's definitely not the end-all be-all. None of us are radio bands on this tour, we're not radio hits or anything, we're just good live bands.

*So, sort of going opposite the commercial route...*

Yeah, cause then... bands like Blues Traveller and Dave, and Phish, can play music fifteen years from now and they'll still get good crowds, because come good times/bad times of radio, they're still going to have fans that love a lot of shows. It's about music, you know, it's not about hype and, articles in magazines and stuff.

*Now, you're origins are from Texas...*

Yeah, we're based in Dallas.

*OK, so did you grow up with Jack or did you meet...*

No, we met at school eight years ago, and just started playing around the bar scene, doing bad cover songs, started out as an acoustic duo, just kept building...

(At this point Jack O'Neil comes in, I introduce myself, shake hands, and Carey takes off to do a song with the opening band, who was Guster incidentally)

*Have you played Vermont before?*

Jack: Yeah, this'll be about the third or fourth time we've been up here I think...in Burlington. We've played Killington a couple times, that's about it.

*So if you're ever in the area again, would you like to play Middlebury College?*

Fuck yeah, man.

*Nice...*

We'll play anywhere, man.

*Just out of curiosity, Guster thanked you in their record jacket back when they were Gus, have they toured with you before or did they just listen to you, cause they have...you can hear some influence there or something.*

Well I think it's more that Ryan, the singer, is from Dallas, Texas. And years ago, he and Carey hooked up, he just contacted Carey for advice and stuff, and over the past, I don't know, three or four years...the first band we played with in Boston was Gus, and we've played with them pretty much every time we've been up here. And this is the first time we've been out on the road with them.

*So this is a good experience...*

Yeah, they're great, I love those guys.

*What music has influenced you and Carey? What were you listening to when you were first putting things together...what did you cover when you were first starting out?*

Well, you know, Neil Young, we did some strange shit too, you know, like Neil Young and Big Country, New Order, REM, you know, your standards. And then of course, you know, played Margaritaville a couple times...but our music has definitely been going on some strange path, which is cool, so lately our influences have been hip hop and stuff like that. Which you can't really tell...but you can tell, you'll be able to tell a little bit on the new record.

*You'll play some new songs tonight, I'm sure?*

Yeah, we'll play some new shit tonight.

*And on the Live from the Americas album, did you do the lyrics for the improv song?*

Yeah...

*Oh, man, I'm very interested in that...*

Ok...that's something that started from the very beginning when me and Peirce first started playing, and in the beginning I didn't sing very much, I mean, I just couldn't sing, you know. But we...really all me and Pierce would do is get drunk, you know, we'd get drunk and play, and one night he started playing that weird chord progression and I just started bullshitting, so...it really, we've done it ever since. Some nights it's pretty goddam good, some nights are...bad. On the Live from Americas I cheated, though, I wrote down the first verse, just to get off the ground, because we were taping it, and I knew it would be the only one that would be on the record. I don't know, it sucked, man, cause otherwise the best thing about a Mexican tune is when you're not really thinking about doing it, and all of a sudden it's like "alright, let's do it." But, that's what a Mexican tune is...we probably won't do one tonight.

*Alright, well, thank you very much for your time.*

No problem, man, hey come up and party with us after the show.

*Alright, thanks a lot.*

# Juliana Hatfield:
## The Exclusive Interview with FMphasis

*As Juliana takes the stage, I inadvertently make a bit of a scene by handing her a note reading "I am an editor for the Middlebury College Radio magazine, 'FMphasis'. Would you be able to do an interview after the show? My name is Jon." The background music has stopped, silence engulfs the club.*

Juliana (half into the mic): Ha ha ha. No.

## Juliana Hatfield, a Fat, Hairy Guy Dancing, and Wide Wail at Toast, 9/19: A Show

by Jonathan Howard

Despite my bitter rejection at the hands of the not-as-nice-to-me-as-she-is-to-toilet-paper center of attention for the evening, I am not going to write a bitter, scathing review of this show (not that it wouldn't be justified). "Why....Why?" you may ask. Well, because I liked it (the show, not the cold and remorseless trampling of my already fragile ego). I do intend, however, to let the frustration at my second ignominious experience in three days (the first: if you were at Otter Nonsense Sunday September 17, the guy who said "Power Rangers" and got resounding "boos" in response, was me) fester and condense until I can't help but unleash it in one violent outburst against one of my friends.

### The Show:

The music could be summed up in one of the band's stage antics, if you could call it that. Juliana has two monstrous Marshall cabinets, both emitting a powerful, driving sound that has rendered my ears temporarily useless. She had put black tape over all of the letters in the four Marshall logos decorating the cabinets except the "h"s and the "a"s. So when you looked at them the cabinets had "ha ha ha ha" written on them. The point: the music was powerful and driving with a

layer of pop-rock happiness taped over the otherwise boring stuff.

Unfortunately, I do not own any of Juliana Hatfield's music. But, I have heard her radio singles, and she played all of them. She opened with the strong yet sweetly melodic "What a Life", brought a diversity of volume into the set with "My Sister", and generally spent all night displaying what has made her the star she is- crowd pleasing melodies layered over intense guitar, bass and drum licks. The band as a whole functioned well. Everyone seemed to be having fun at playing fun music. Everyone, that is, except the keyboardist, who looked like she would rather be in my shoes, broken and humiliated, than up on stage. She did smile, but not until the encore: during a song Hatfield wrote for the alterna-bandwagon TV series, "My So-Called Life", the band's rhythm guitarist (who had been sitting idle with the drummer and bassist) walked onto the stage with a big 'n hairy roadie and started slow dancing with him. Ha ha ha, lots of smiles, the two wacky guys walk off, the audience remembers that Hatfield is playing at about the same time she does.

The encore, incidentally, featured a very nice distortion-less, Hatfield-all-by-herself version of Weezer's "Say It 'Ain't So", bringing the tally of songs she played that I knew up to five (out of about fifteen). And that's all I have to say about Hatfield's performance. As far as the other aspects of the show are concerned, the mix: great, the crowd: mellow, the security guards: unnecesary. My advice to you: if she is playing, and you can see her for free, or <u>at most</u> for less than the price of a new CD, I would strongly suggest you go check her out. Her voice is amazing and the power-pop style will make your head nod and your feet tap...plus she sometimes plays with great openers, like Wide Wail.

Wide Wail, as I understand it, is a Burlington band. But unlike most other Vermont groups I've heard, they kick serious buttocks. Sadly, I was only able to see the last couple minutes of a half hour set, but those couple minutes ROCKED!!! I would highly suggest you go check this group out. They are a five-piece (two guitars, bass, drums, female vocalist) that have a sound that is, as they say, "really good". Look for Wide Whale to play a show at Middlebury in the upcoming months, sponsored, of course, by WRMC.

I hope that my personal opinion of Juliana Hatfield hasn't at all distorted my account of the show. I swear, it was fun. But don't take my word for it, get off your beer-encrusted butt and go see her, maybe she'll make an ass out of you, too.

All right. I've got your ears. Or at least your eyes, anyway. So I figure — Why not write something about carnal yearnings?

Well, for starters, this is a family oriented magazine. If we even mentioned the horizontal mambo, our direct funding from the Christian Coalition would dry right up. And we need
Pat Roberston's dollars, let me tell you.

So I think sex will not be discussed. Not that it isn't a perfectly fascinating topic. Especially if it involves sheep.

Alas, this space which is now occupied by my ramblings was supposed to be taken up by an interview with Blumfeld, an incredible band from Germany. Unfortunately, there were some organizational difficulties — basically, I am not organized. So the interview will be in the next issue. The next issue will kick so much ass that I'm buying metal pants. We're gonna have an article on censorship, a review of the new double Smashing Pumpkins disc, and some other generally heavy shit. It'll be 'da bomb.

But since I have some space to discuss some things here, I think I will. And this will be serious, so hold onto your hats.

*

The G.O.P. unveiled it's fiscal-year budget on Friday in the Senate. Among other things, the budget drastically cuts funding for the National Endowment for the Arts. If these proposed budget cuts are signed into reality, the Endowment will be forced to make deep cuts into many of its programs.

"So what?" You may say. "Art doesn't affect me. And besides, these pinko artists are just getting fat and lazy off the government's money."

But this is not the truth. Though the truth is something that is especially hard to define when you are dealing with government funding, the NEA budget situation does have certain truths to it that are easy to see and consider.

NEA does sponsor art-education for inner-city youth — a slew of projects that bring color (literally) into the lives of many economically disadvantaged children. New York City alone has hundreds of projects on the NEA rosters, and I would say that half of them work to bring hope into young lives where hope is not frequently found. Unlike many of the social programs of the past, which came from a perspective steeped in so-called American values, much of today's art education looks to uncover the concealed worth in the life-experiences of the students themselves.

NEA widely funds efforts in the literary arts; if photography is not something that you can appreciate, surely you can see the merit in writing, modern society's chief means of communication.

The concept of spreading the word about art is a simple one. People who are creating things, whether these things are creative expressions of self that use the traditional art supplies or direct attacks on discrimination through journalism and prose, deserve a forum through which they can be heard. Unfortunately, establishing this sort of a forum requires money. That is a fact. And this money is not likely to come from corporations who care more about their bottom line then the length of the unemployment line their policies create. Why should R.J. Reynolds sponsor an exhibit of photographs that include pictures of cancerous lungs taken from the bodies of lifetime smokers. This would be inconsistent with their obvious goals — to make money. In general, art doesn't want to make money. And a deeper sense of who you are. It can also solve problems. How many drive-by shootings occurred at the Museum of Modern Art last year? (Well, okay, there was that one, but it involved me so it doesn't count).

Sorry about the whole getting up on a soapbox thing. It just kinda happened. But really, write you local senator, house representative. Tell them - I want art! Hopefully, that won't be the name of their secretary.

by Pauls Toutonghi

## Toastin--

by Ian Brand (with a little help from Ben Hardy)

You can't have Toast without Toasters. On Friday, September 28, Burlington witnessed the inevitable union of Club Toast and the New York City ska band, the Toasters. The result was an explosion of intense skanking, fearsome sax solos, and upbeat tunes that shook the foundations of the Burlington club.

The Toasters boasted a full-blown three piece horn section (trombone, tenor sax and trumpet), "Buck" Hindley (the founding member of the Toasters) on lead guitar and vocals, a phenomenal rhythm section, and Coolie Ranx on vocals and crowd control. They played a set list that featured songs from every one of their five albums. the night was highlighted by rousing versions of "Social Security," "East Side Beat," and "Thrill Me Up."

The band's tight songs and rocking rhythms fueled the crowd for the entire hour and a half set. Although the crowd was not as united and respectful as is customary at ska shows (they instead chose to mosh and crowd surf) in a post-show interview Coolie Ranx said, "We have to forgive them. Most of them haven't been to a ska show, so they don't know how to act. We give them a couple shows to figure it out." Coolie spoke to us about his philosophy on ska, Two-Tone, and harmony. "My idea of a perfect world is one big ska show. Black and white, man, that's what it's all about. Unity. That's the message I'm trying to send."

We also spoke to Coolie about his future with the Toasters, life on the road, and the Toasters' recent tour of Europe. "All I could get in Germany was french fries. It's the only thing I knew how to say in German. You know, pommes frites. And they had bread and cheese at every meal. I need some meat... There were a lot of skins and Nazis there, but they were real well behaved. We had no problems with the crowd."

When asked about the trials of the road, Coolie lamented that he has a young kid at home who he hardly ever sees. If he is home three days out of a week, it's an abnormally good week. Other people live in his apartment in the city, and so he really can't call home. Rather, home to

him are the places on the road — the hotels.
After we spoke, Coolie got up and gave each of us — myself, Ben, and two other friends who had joined us for the show — a hug. It seemed as if, through the course of the show and the fifteen minute conversation, we connected. "You meet a guy at a ska show and afterwards, he's your friend... that's what it's all about. Unity."

# UPCOMING SHOWS:

*MIDDLEBURY*-NOV. 17- **WIDE WAIL**
**THE PANTS**

*CLUB TOAST*-OCT. 30-**STRANGEFOLK**
NOV. 1 -**LIVE REGGAE**
NOV. 2 -**VOODOO**
**GLOWSKULLS**
NOV. 4 -**CHIN HO!**
**ORBIT**
**GOLDFISH**

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON UPCOMING SHOWS, CHECK OUT THE *WRMC WEBB PAGE* AT-
http://www.middlebury.edu/~wrmc
(MUST BE ALL LOWERCASE!)

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON SHOWS AT *CLUB TOAST*, CALL (802) 660-2088

FOR A *CLUB TOAST* SCHEDULE, CALL JUSTIN SHIPMAN ext. 4256

# NEXT ISSUE:

*WIDE WAIL*

VOODOO GLOWSKULLS

*BLUMFELD*

WOOD RIVER BANDITS

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*TOWER CONTROVERSY*

CENSORSHIP

*MORE CD REVIEWS*

WRMC PAINTBALL MISSION

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